

April 3, 2024

Chair Kathleen Drew
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
P.O. Box 43172
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Chair Kathleen Drew and Council Members,

We are writing to urge the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) to reconsider its current trajectory to drastically reduce the Horse Heaven Clean Energy Center project and set devastating precedents around the ferruginous hawk (Spec-5 Mitigation Measure) and habitat corridor requirements (Hab-1 Mitigation Measure) that will prevent a variety of new clean energy projects, generation upgrades to existing projects through repowering of wind turbines, and other transmission infrastructure projects throughout central Washington.

The applicant had already proposed significant project impact avoidance and mitigation, including the removal of Wind Turbine Generators and a major portion of its original Solar Siting Areas. These reductions had already reduced the project generation from approximately 1150 megawatts to 700 megawatts and were in response to the extremely robust and lengthy development of the project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which was based firmly on science and written by independent experts at EFSEC's direction.

EFSEC is charged with helping to bring clean energy projects forward in a timely manner to help Washington comply with the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA). Our state needs new renewable energy facilities to cut our emissions and combat climate change on pace with fossil plant retirement. Without the added capacity of additional renewable energy, Washington cannot meet its CETA goals of becoming coal-fuel free by 2025 and fully renewable by 2045.

While acknowledging the size and complexity of this project, the current EFSEC review process is at best adding years of delay, adding ongoing burdensome regulatory requirements during operation, and reducing project scale, all of which will drive higher ratepayer costs and keep needed green electrons from flowing into our electrical system when our region needs them most in the next five years.

And if EFSEC persists with its current trajectory, it will send a clear signal to other investors and project developers that Washington state is by far not the location in which to reliably and affordably site the clean energy generation required under state law. The result will be more out-of-state projects, costlier transmission, and higher utility rates for every person in Washington, in addition to the foregone benefits of new jobs, local economic impact and taxes generated.

The Horse Heaven Clean Energy Center (HHCEC) is a critical component of building Washington state's resilient clean energy future, keeping our lights on at affordable rates, and meeting our state's commitments to reduce carbon emissions and fight climate change, and bringing good jobs to our communities. Getting solar and wind energy online quickly, and responsibly, is critical to the health and affordability of our state's communities.

We urge EFSEC to reconsider its emergent deliberation and subsequent direction to staff, as well as the regulatory precedents it is setting in regard to the ferruginous hawk (Spec-5 Mitigation Measure) and habitat corridor requirements (Hab-1 Mitigation Measure) that not only implicate the Horse Heaven Clean

Energy Center project but many other clean energy generation projects and infrastructure upgrades that our state and region require now more than ever.

Respectfully,

Diane McDaniel, Retired AFL-CIO Staff

Jessica Wadsworth, Benton City Council & Laborers 348

Doug Donley, Field Representative, IUOE Local 302

Jason Lohr, IBEW 112

Julian Jensen, Representative, Western States Regional Council of Carpenters, Local 59

Billy Wallace, District Council of Laborers (LIUNA)

Cisco Elguezabal, Secretary-Treasurer, LIUNA Local 348

Greg Gales, President, Ironworkers 14

Travis Swayze, Business Manager, IBEW Local 112

Judi Johannesen, Retired PNNL

Kathryn Tominey, Retired Research Scientist

Carl Baker, Chair, Tri-Cities Democrats

Pamela Gaudet, Franklin County Democratic State Committee

Justin Raffa, Benton County Democratic State Committee

Misty Muchlinski, Chair, Benton County Democrats

Jake Dorsey, Chair, 8th LD Democrats

John Kennedy, Chair, 15th LD Democrats

Ana Ruiz Kennedy, Chair, Franklin County Democrats